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Whole Foods Workers Demand Higher Wages And A Union

By Tim Maher

On the afternoon of Nov. 6, a delegation of 20 cashiers, stockers, and cooks at Whole Foods Market in San Francisco initiated a temporary work stoppage to deliver a petition to Whole Foods management demanding a \$5 per hour wage increase for all employees and no retaliation against workers for organizing a union. After the delegation presented the petition to management, workers and supporters held a rally outside the store, located at 4th and Harrison Streets in San Francisco's South-of-Market district.

A worker must earn \$29.83 per hour to afford a market-rate one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco, according to a 2014 report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Workers at the store currently earn from \$11.25 to \$19.25 per hour. The new minimum wage ordinance just approved by San Francisco voters will raise the city's minimum to \$12.25 per hour next year—less than half of what is

needed to rent an apartment.

Over 50 workers from the 4th Street store signed the petition. In addition to demanding the \$5 per hour wage increase, the petition raises issues about paid time off, hours and scheduling, safety and health, and a retirement plan.

Whole Foods is a multinational chain with over 400 stores in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, with \$13 billion in annual sales, and 80,000 employees. Prices are high, which is why Whole Foods is colloquially known as "Whole Paycheck."

Beneath Whole Foods' glossy image of social responsibility, working conditions at Whole Foods reflect the low industry standards that dominate all food and retail industries. Despite the company's claims to the contrary, low wages, constant understaffing, and inconsistent schedules are rampant company-wide.

Just recently CEO John Mackey

Continued on 6



Whole Foods workers picket after going public with the IWW in San Francisco on Nov. 6.

Photo: Zoe Meyers

Toronto Harm Reduction Workers Organize With The IWW



Photo: THRWU

IWW harm reduction workers in Toronto.

This time, the theme was different—the topic of discussion was work.

Workers shared stories of unionized workplaces with trade unions that wouldn't have them as members; others spoke about the fact that management depends on workers being on social assistance to offset their low wages and lack of benefits. Workers doing the same jobs at two different sites realized that while one group was making \$10 for three hours of work, the other was being paid \$15 per hour. Some workers explained that they were paid with transit tokens and pizza. Some workers demanded a union.

On Nov. 11, after months of intensive organizing, the Toronto Harm Reduction Workers Union (THRWU), an affiliate of the Toronto General Membership Branch of the IWW, announced its existence to management at South Riverdale Community Health Centre and Central Toronto Community Health Centres. The union demanded employer recognition, a promise of non-retaliation for union activity, and a meeting with management

to discuss important issues of workplace equity. The union also announced its intention to forgo the highly legalistic and bureaucratized Ontario Labour Relations Board certification process, electing for a strategy of solidarity unionism that allows workers full control over decision making. The THRWU is a city-wide organization, representing over 50 employed, unemployed, and student workers. It currently has members at over a dozen agencies, and is continuing to organize with the goal of unionizing all of the city's harm reduction

workers. "Along with the direct unionism approach, the THRWU campaign is also based on a multiple workplace organizing model that allows for organizing committees at multiple sites to pool their resources and experiences as they organize together. This solidarity is a precursor to expanding workers' struggle to the broader industry," explained THRWU worker-organizer Sarah Ovens.

Harm reduction work began with the implementation and provision of needle

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IWW Resurgence In Bellingham, Washington

By x331980

IWW membership around Bellingham, Wash. surged this fall. In the past four months the group grew from one lonely delegate to 12 members. In early August, a recently-transplanted Wob from Phoenix contacted the delegate via the general administration. They joined a picket line on behalf of the local farm workers union, Familias Unidas por la Justicia, and found yet another Wobbly on the line. "I thought I was the only IWW in Bellingham," he said. Then, an "old hand" from the defunct Bellingham General Membership Branch (GMB) of the 1980s returned to the fold. Before long, new members were coming out of the woodwork by word of mouth. There are now enough Wobblies to apply for a GMB charter.

Local Wobs work in distribution centers, the city fire department, legal services, roof maintenance and telecommunications. Two are students and a couple others are unemployed. There is one sole proprietor IWW job shop. The first general membership meeting was held on Oct. 26. Members who had not previously met got to know each other a bit. An election was held for a secretary and a bylaws review committee, which has completed a draft set of bylaws. Meetings are scheduled for the last Sunday of the month. See the *IW*



Wobs protest the Sakuma Photo: Bellingham IWW Brothers farm stand.

directory for contact information.

Members live in Bellingham and in Skagit County to the south. Bellingham IWW members participated in solidarity work for the farm workers and their boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms berries (see "Union Harvests Major Victories For Farmworkers In Washington," page 7), as well as the OUR Walmart events on Black Friday. Leafleting and face-to-face outreach with workers at the local Jimmy John's and the several Starbucks shops has been sporadic. The Vancouver and Seattle branches are within an hour or so of travel and the Vancouver Island GMB is just on the other side of the San Juan Islands. Vancouver and Bellingham Wobblies met up at the Peace Arch climate rally and gathered around Bellingham's banner (see "Climate Change Knows No Borders" on page 5 of the November *IW*). **Continued on 7**

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Evolving Into A Union Of Equality And Inclusion

Fellow Workers,

In the November issue of the *Industrial Worker* (*IW*), our editor did well to publish both a letter in support and one in critique of Fellow Worker (FW) Maria Parrotta's report from the 2014 IWW General Convention ("The 2014 IWW General Convention: Learning From Our Mistakes, Moving Forward," October 2014 *IW*, page 1 & 6). However the critique, instead of making the (valid) point of separating news and opinion, only served to reinforce FW Parrotta's original point; that sexism is alive in our union. The critique served as a real attempt to silence the bringing forth of an important opinion regarding events that I, as a union member unable to attend the convention, was not privy to until reading that issue. By this I mean that the critique sidestepped all of the original points regarding sexism and instead levied a response based upon loose comparisons of union membership and meeting attendance; points which are irrelevant to the original piece and the message thereof.

We are workers of the world. We are not just men, not just white, and not just of one perspective regarding our relations to one another and our working conditions

under the boot of the beast. As the working class our body is literally made up of countless voices and perspectives, countless avenues of power, and countless opportunities for abuse, oppression, and, ultimately, failure. It is our responsibility to ourselves—as a body of workers united in the face of capital—to accept internal criticism and take it a step further, to welcome it and see it precisely as it is: the evolution of our class.

In essence, we must become comfortable evolving into exactly what we are. I encourage my male fellow workers to take a moment and see this as it is, for only as a class undivided that we will ever have the strength to overcome the contradiction.

Milo Unti

I am writing to express my strong support for Fellow Worker (FW) Maria Parrotta's piece on the 2014 IWW General Convention and FW Diane Krauthamer's very correct decision to publish it on the front page (see "The 2014 IWW General Convention: Learning From Our Mistakes,

"If I had a hammer... I'd SMASH Patriarchy"



Graphic: iww.org

"Moving Forward," October *IW*, pages 1 & 6). I am proud to call these two women my fellow workers and to have them in my General Membership Branch (GMB), because it is people like them who will actually work to make this union what it

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IWW directory

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Evolving Into A Union Of Equality And Inclusion

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claims to be—about equality and inclusion.

I am a dual carder who works for the mainstream labor movement in the United States, and it never ceases to amaze me that members of the IWW can talk about how the labor movement in the United States is a white man's club, and yet not examine our own union. I was the only woman in my GMB until these two joined me. Is this the "One Big Union" we want?!

To those of you involved in the walkout at the convention and those of you criticizing the *IW*'s coverage of the convention—realize that YOU are what alienates women from this union.

FW Diane explained very well that opinions are published throughout the paper in every issue and only get called out when it is a woman's opinion. Instead of trying to make excuses to hide behind your prejudices (claiming it is an issue of where the piece was published), maybe you should try to listen to what other fellow workers might be experiencing that you yourself never will understand as a man. Personal safety and harassment are not everyday concerns in your life as they are for so many of your women fellow workers. Without recognizing our own privilege and listening to others who are experts on their own experiences, we will not develop into the union we are all supposed to be working toward. FW Maria was very candid about the Washington D.C. branch's shortcomings. She is one of the branch members actively working to overcome these problems. But getting defensive of your own branch, and using the fact that the D.C. branch might be more screwed up as an excuse to avoid working to address legitimate criticisms of your own branch more generally, is standing in the way of the IWW becoming the inclusive and equal union we claim we are.

Erin Radford

IWW Constitution Preamble

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

We Need To Focus On Our Common Goals, Objectives

*Cause the factories are in ruins, decent jobs are hard to find
And you can't get ahead no matter how hard you try
Cause the Big Boys make the rules, tough luck for everyone else
And out on the streets, brother, it's every man for himself
But I still remember when we marched side by side
Back in Gary, Indiana in 1959.*

These are some of the lyrics to Dave Alvin's song "Gary Indiana 1959" from his new album "Eleven-Eleven." Alvin recalls marching side-by-side with his fellow workers as their unions fought to preserve their jobs, communities and families. Today, these very issues are still a reality for Americans battling for decent pay and working conditions. This is also a fresh memory to the millions who heroically fought back against plant closures, outsourcing of jobs, relocation of factories to union-busting states and cheap offshore labor sites, and the endless race to the bottom.

When these workers marched—then and now—side-by-side into the ranks of corporate goons, hostile negotiators and government agencies only interested in protecting the profits of the wealthy, they did not—and do not—concern themselves with their brothers' and sisters' position on abortion rights or gay marriage. They do not quiz their fellow workers on their attitudes toward patriarchy. They do not concern themselves with the religious beliefs, or lack of them, of their comrades marching beside them. They do not care if the people they've linked arms with have a university degree or never finished high school. They do not wrangle at their union meetings over minor matters and harshly criticize those who disagree with them. They do not care about the criminal record of their colleagues. Though arguments, often heated, on strategy and position are common, these union members do not

tolerate disruptive, hateful comments or actions. They do not care if their union brothers and sisters are black, Chicano, white or Asian.

That is because these differences are insignificant when compared to what they share—a fierce dedication to the common good of their fellow workers and to their own well-being, which can only be achieved through collective action. That's what happens in a union that works.

A quick scan of the October *Industrial Worker*, however, seems to tell another story. It is the story of a labor organization looking for an identity and rife with discontent, frustration and unhappiness (see "The 2014 IWW General Convention: Learning From Our Mistakes, Moving Forward," pages 1 & 6). I have been involved in the Left for a long time, and the tone of several of the articles, including the disturbing account of the last annual meeting, sadly reminds me of the last days of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1969 when that organization tore itself apart over identity politics, ideological schisms and personalities. Perhaps the confused identity of the IWW is best illustrated by the piece lashing out at the predominance of college-educated white male membership followed by the article on Marx that would require a degree in political science to fully comprehend, but it's more than that. It seems to be there is a malaise rooted in the fundamental contradictions of the organization: are we a real union committed to organizing real workplaces where the most marginalized and oppressed workers are located (in which case you better prepare yourself for views on gender, gay rights, religion and so on that may make your hair curl), or are we a bunch of disenchanted privileged white folks attracted to the romance and vision of the IWW who are more interested in arguing over social issues and—the eternal curse of the left—more interested in asserting the "correct" position than being successful?



Obviously, in the world of the early 20th century we were that broad-based fighting union, and hopefully we will be again. But in the meantime, I think the IWW needs to acknowledge it will always have an element of members—like me—who are not front-line workers, but who have a lot of background, are profoundly committed to radical social change, and who are willing to support the efforts of the organization and promote its ideology. What strikes me as far more damaging is the corrosive tone of the current discourse. Any good organization revolves around trust, cooperation, commitment to a common goal and mutual respect. Perhaps we need to focus on defining who we are in terms of our common goals and objectives, not in terms of our differences.

Don Sawyer

Working Writers Contest!

Which working writers have inspired you? Here is your chance to get their name out! The IWW Literature Committee is starting an annual working writers contest, and is looking for suggestions for a name. This could be the name of a working writer, or it could be another inspiring name for a writing contest. All suggestions are welcome. Please send your suggestion, and explanation, to iwwliteraturecommittee@lists.iww.org with the subject "WORKING WRITERS CONTEST."

**In Solidarity,
The IWW Literature Committee**

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially—that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 180195, Chicago, IL 60618, USA.

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I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.

I agree to abide by the IWW constitution.

I will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Post Code, Country: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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To request a renewal or inquire on your subscription expiration date email store@iww.org. Please title your email "Subscription Inquiry."

Answer Two Strategy Questions To Win

By Daniel Gross

Winning a worker justice struggle has got to be one of the greatest things that life offers. Winning means a better future for a family, for a community, and even for a society.

Winning a worker justice struggle has also got to be one of life's most difficult endeavors. Forces with great power, wealth, and privilege resist positive change with a mighty determination.

Winning doesn't happen by accident. It takes a complete organizational model to build an enduring industrial union. Strategy is an essential element of a model, and effective strategy-making in the IWW is one of the keys to getting the union to the next level. Our strategies must assert sufficient power to win demands and overcome resistance to change.



Last month, I introduced the two key questions to formulate strategy: where to struggle and how to win. We modified and adapted these questions from the work of Professor Roger Martin for use in worker organizations.

I suggested that an excellent way to learn how to use the two questions is to apply them to existing worker organizations. I'd like to help you get started with a case study.

Let me say first that I'm sharing a strategy-making framework rather than proposing a particular strategy for the IWW. Strategy is not copy and paste. Each industrial union-building effort will have to do its own strategic thinking based on its vision, values, opportunities, and capabilities. That said, I think the following case study offers a rich opportunity for learning strategy.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a Florida-based organization of farmworkers in the tomato industry. Now well-known, the CIW spent 10 years opposing egregious abuses without gaining significant traction.

In my estimation, the organization's initial where-to-struggle choice was the tomato fields and surrounding community of Immokalee, with farmworkers and local supporters directly targeting

farming companies. The how-to-win choice was strikes, marches through the community, and similar local initiatives. This strategy didn't work, and that's hard, but not fatal. What matters is staying alive until you find a strategy that works—which is exactly what the CIW did.

After 10 years of valiant but unsuccessful struggle, the CIW's where-to-struggle choice pivoted dramatically to the fast food companies and grocery stores who purchase from the tomato farms, with farmworkers and local supporters coordinating a national movement of students, people of faith, activists, and prominent opinion-leaders. The how-to-win choice became farmworkers moving these national allies to challenge the retail brands around their tomato supply chain in the news media, in the streets around the country, and more.

This new strategy successfully moved the big brands into a code of conduct with the CIW and the farm corporations, with groundbreaking improvements for farmworkers. Like all successful strategy formulations, the CIW's strategy is rooted in research and understanding of how an industry works, the key relationships, and the key opportunities for influence. Understanding secondary stakeholders, in this case the retail buyers, is always critical. Without insight into the industry, I don't think the organization would have ever figured out a way forward.

The CIW and IWW are obviously different organizations. The CIW built their winning strategy within their vision, and you'll build your strategy within the IWW's unique vision. Other successful worker organizations, including in agriculture, have made very different where-to-struggle and how-to-win choices. There's no one right answer. The idea is to apply the questions and get your own answers, not copy another group's choices.

One thing is certain: winning is as hard as it is essential. You and your fellow workers will have to make focused choices and assert big power to taste the fruits of justice. The two strategy questions will help you get there.

The Importance Of Being [Pronoun]

By x371688

For me, being trans in the IWW is an interesting exercise in combined acceptance and growing pains. I've largely met fellow workers (FWs) who respect how my pronouns are he/him, who haven't batted an eye at how those pronouns are binary while my presentation and identification are not. In many meetings I attend, during introductions there is often a cis FW who remembers to ask that we state our pronouns after giving names or other information. I've served as Branch Secretary-Treasurer (BST) for almost 18 months. I feel like my voice is usually acknowledged. Now, I was assigned female at birth, and typically, trans people in that position have an easier time with cis acceptance because in dominant (frequently accurate) narratives we're the ones with an aversion to binary femininity/femaleness; everyone's internalized misogyny makes this a more socially-acceptable gender experience than alternatives. It could be that I've missed overtly oppressive actions against me, because I'm not in the main category of trans people who contend with bullshit on a more constant basis. But whether or not that's true, I can't help feeling a growing discontent with some attitudes I hear expressed by other FWs, along with subtle behavioral trends that may have to do with my gender being other than cis male. Chiefest among these is something that happens when introductions involve giving pronouns: what I call "the pronoun shrug."

The pronoun shrug has a few permutations. Form A: someone doesn't even address the topic of pronouns when it's their turn. Form B: someone says some variant of "you can call me whatever,"

"any pronouns are fine," etc. Form C: someone offers a binary pronoun option and accompanies it with the non-binary singular "they" as an alternative. Most of the time, I witness this from men whom I perceive as cis since they never assert any sort of gender (in)difference outside of this interaction.

Now, let me establish that I've witnessed this from FWs with whom I have equally strong or weak relationships, and I'd love to take the matter up individually with each of them, but there are frankly too many for me to do so without exhausting myself. Also, I'd never expect anyone to out themselves as trans when they weren't comfortable doing so. I don't mean, "Your behavior suggests that you are inherently cis, or insufficiently trans!" Rather, my concern centers upon the message that the pronoun shrug can unwittingly send, regardless of who does it or witnesses it. I only even raise demographics to note that if you are a cis man, particularly one with other privileges, you may want to pay closer attention here.

Anyway, here's my worry: my gender identity isn't just something I have to fight to establish. I also struggle with making the actual fact of my transness accepted. Even though it happens less to me in radical spaces than outside of them, throughout my daily life I have to contend with my right to be called he/him getting questioned, alongside the mere idea that anybody can self-select pronouns. These problems are two sides of the same coin—transphobia—but they're not absolutely



Graphic: Earth First! Newswire

the same. Yes, I can sometimes be called he/him by making a major personal effort to dress and present masculine/butch/other variants of things that many people assume means I'm inherently someone who uses he/him, (i.e. what they'd call a male). But this strategy caters to people's expectations, relying on the premise that whether or not an individual is trans-accepting, if I can competently play the gender game then I can "win." I'd rather operate in a manner where I'm not obligated to dress and present any one way—where if I say I'm he/him, then that's it, people will just call me that. I greatly prefer this to an environment where I get nervous about saying I'm he/him because it means that suddenly I can't wear makeup anymore lest it cause confusion.

Unfortunately, that's where I'm usually stuck. Trans-ness is still widely regarded as a deviation from the norm. Just as man is considered some universal default with woman being the binary aberration, so too is cis the forced default and trans the thing that's Other. I don't want to be Other. The pronoun shrug, however, covertly maintains this. Form A, declining to even comment upon pronouns, implies that the speaker's gender is apparent, rubbing my nose in the fact that my gender is unusual. Forms B and C, saying that any pronoun is fine or that they can be used alongside a

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 78

Greatly Depressed

The United States had known many economic depressions, but nothing like the deep, drawn-out depression that followed the stock market crash of October 1929. President Herbert Hoover assured the nation that "Prosperity is just around the corner" as jobs disappeared. The number of unemployed grew from 3 million in 1930 to more than 15 million just three years later. Wages dropped by 45 percent.



As the Great Depression worsened, more and more women workers found themselves out of work—and in 1933 unemployment seemed to be growing faster among women than among young male workers. Competition between men and women for jobs intensified. The president of the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh went so far as to suggest that 75 percent of available jobs be reserved for men.

Some state legislatures enacted laws removing married women from state jobs; although overturned, the intent of such discriminatory laws was carried out through executive orders in Indiana, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island restricting employment of married women. Factories, schools and public utilities laid off or imposed bans on hiring married women.

But fully 40 percent of women working in industry were married, most bringing home wages supplementing the meager earnings of others in the family. "If you are a woman, you will understand what it means to work in the factory and keep house," wrote one woman in 1930. "I have been working, even when my husband had a job, in order to make ends meet. Now he is out of work since last October, and don't ask me how we get along on my miserable earnings. But without it we would starve."

(To be continued)

Graphic: Mike Konopacki

binary cis choice—these ought to suggest some kind of solidarity, but the statements sound hollow if everything else about the speaker's presentation consistently suggests cis-ness, if they don't otherwise experiment with asking for a pronoun besides what default cis choice most people assume, if nobody feels comfortable randomly assigning them a pronoun besides the default cis choice. If, in brief, this person behaves no differently from the person who shrugged things off in form A; for them, "achieving" a desired pronoun is not any form of struggle. As long as I and others have to genuinely fight for he/him, she/her, xe/hir, they/them, and numerous additional possibilities, I don't find it reassuring for someone to treat pronouns as a foregone conclusion or a cavalier affair.

But I think there's luckily a simple solution for anyone with the impulse to pronoun shrug. Basically, when "what's your preferred pronoun?" is asked, always answer with the pronoun(s) you really do prefer; if there's more than one, briefly explain the contexts in which you'd prefer each. Other trans people may not feel the same as I do about this, but I personally prefer to hear someone give an honest, straightforward answer instead of a non-answer or an answer that feels misguidedly tailored to express "gender blindness." If everyone did just answer honestly, we'd still need to work on how we all respond to that honesty—but I'd already feel like I stood on vastly more equal ground with cis comrades.

Wobbly & North American News

We Are All Ayotzinapa

By FW Martin Zehr

Every day there are casualties of the class war in America's cities. People are shot by cops, imprisoned for small crimes, beaten and tear-gassed at demonstrations and subjected to street violence in their neighborhoods. The names of Oscar Grant, James Boyd and Mike Brown become part of weekly lists of victimized brothers and sisters around the nation. Suppressed news coverage avoids the mention of children from Central America imprisoned in Artesia, N.M., and 43 *normalistas* (student teachers) are burned alive in Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, by narco-traffickers with collaboration from police and public officials. Elections come and go, but police repression remains.

On Oct. 22, Pittsburgh residents raised their voices and took steps to bring people of all colors together to fight police brutality. At the Pittsburgh City-County Building, Wobblies joined 50 other workers to demand an end to police brutality as part of a national day of action in cities throughout the country. Names of our neighbors listed under "STOLEN LIVES" on a banner brought out the reality of Pittsburgh's Iron Heel: Damian Jordan, Charles Dixon, Kenneth Walker, Dion Hall, Michael Ellerbee, Bernard Rogers—Stolen Lives.

Resistance grows in Ferguson, Mo., as demonstrators continue to protest



Pittsburgh rally on Oct. 22. Photo: Ray Gerard

officially sanctioned murder. The city of Kobani stands in its own power against genocidal assaults on Kurdish cantons in Syria. *Autodefensas* (popular militias) organize residents to defend their communities in the state of Michoacán from official repression and narco-traffickers. Residents in Albuquerque take over the City Council meeting and issue a people's warrant for the arrest of Chief of Police Gordon Eden. On Nov. 11, people in cities around the nation marched against capitalism. An injury to one is an injury to all.

People who cannot feel safe in their communities because of police violence; people saying in public what is covered up in the media; determination to change drives peoples' resistance; empty promises replace justice for the criminals among us: we will not accept this future for our children and their children. End officially sanctioned violence. ¡No pasarán!

Obituaries

Farewell, Fellow Worker Frederic S. Lee

By Jon Bekken

Former IWW General Executive Board chair Frederic Lee died on Oct. 23. A member of the IWW for 29 years, Fellow Worker (FW) Lee was also a leading economist, founder of the *Heterodox Economics Newsletter*, and at the time of his death, president-elect of the Association for Evolutionary Economics. His rigorous scholarship, international reputation, and commitment to organizing networks of solidarity helped open a space for alternative approaches in a field long dominated by worshippers of markets and wealth.

I first met Fred in 1985, when I was General Secretary-Treasurer of the Industrial Workers of the World. He was teaching at Roosevelt University at the time and came by the office one day to discuss Wobbly activities and our approach to building a new society based upon real democracy on the job, meeting everyone's material needs, and creating the possibilities for all to live satisfying, fulfilling lives. I knew Fred was a Wobbly at heart the first time we met, but we talked several times over the next few months before he accepted his red card.

Over the decades that followed, Fred kept up his IWW membership. More importantly, he stayed true to those Wobbly ideals. He played the key role in reviving a moribund IWW organization in the British Isles while teaching there, served as chair of the IWW's General Executive Board, and spearheaded the successful effort to liberate Joe Hill's ashes from the U.S. National Archives, where the federal government was quietly holding them captive, and to scatter them around the world in accordance with Joe Hill's last wishes (see photo above).

He joined the IWW Hungarian Literature Fund as veteran Wobblies were handing off this legacy to a younger generation, helping to support the publication of new IWW and labor literature. This included the annual labor history calendar he and I worked on together for so many years. In this work, as in all his work for the IWW, he did not hesitate



Signing ceremony for Joe Hill's ashes: Trudy Peterson, Utah Phillips & Fred Lee, 1988. Photo: reuther.wayne.edu

to take on the drudge work of stuffing envelopes and hauling mail to the post office, realizing that there is little point to producing Wobbly literature without making sure it gets into workers' hands.

In 2005, as we were celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the IWW, Fred suggested a conference of radical economists and labor activists interested in economics to explore the intersection of Wobbly ideas and economic theory, and he made it happen. The paper he presented at that conference was a concrete example of how rigorous economic theory and workplace strategies derived from on-the-job struggles lead to a common emphasis on job control and struggles over the conditions of our labor (it appears in the book we co-edited, "Radical Economics and Labor"). Such struggles are fundamentally battles to assert our human dignity against an economic system determined to treat us as a cogs in the capitalist apparatus, as agents of profit-making, as subjects. It is in refusing subjugation and exploitation, Fred knew, that we discover our capacity and realize our humanity.

Fred was a Wobbly through and through; a rebel worker who never abandoned the cause. He knew the struggle was often difficult, but also that it was well worth fighting. Our power, he knew, lies in organization and in action. He will be missed.

FW Lee's ashes will be distributed at the Haymarket Monument in Waldheim Cemetery; more information on his work and on the scholarship fund that continues his legacy can be found at <http://heterodoxnews.com/leefs>.

A Sea Of Black Flags

By Max Perkins

Truly the most amazing thing I have ever been a part of, the Peoples' Climate March on Sept. 21 in New York City, was beyond the biggest mass of activists I have ever seen. Have you ever seen 200 to 300 anarchists, from every part of the country and from all over the world? WOW!



Graphic: eagnews.org

So many people were asking, "Who are you?" and the reply was "We are anarchists!" "Oh we need more of you! Yes we do!" The march was amazing and peaceful with much support for us, many people taking pictures and cheering us on. At one point a huge group of young people of color on bikes saw us and there was a massive show of anti-police solidarity. Wonderful!

The march continued to Times Square, with wave upon wave of dedicated activists and no loss of energy. The chants never stopped, and my voice was really gone. The follow-up to this was that, while we made a huge statement, we received no press (not that we were seeking it, but to have so many anarchists together, you would think that maybe someone would say something!). Coverage seemed, as is common, to focus on the "big" groups. Even "Democracy Now!" did not mention the anarchist involvement in the march. I think it means we have to work harder to bring the message to the people; that this should not be a one-time thing but a regular occurrence, for people forget all too quickly, and carry on with their lives as if nothing happened. I have been corresponding with Fellow Workers (FWs), including FW Maria from the IWW's Washington D.C. branch, who, like me, wants to see better communication and solidarity actions that include many branches. Our struggle continues, and until we reach our goal of a world free from the shackles of capitalist oppression, we must carry on. For an injury to one is truly an injury to all! Solidarity forever, and special thanks to Maria, the D.C. IWW, New York City Black Rose and Polish Anarchists, and any others who helped make this happen.

iPresente! FW Eugene Jack

By Harry Siiton, San Francisco Bay Area GMB

IWW member Eugene (Gene) Jack died in his late 80s in the latter part of September in Cascade, Mont.

Gene was a late recruit to the One Big Union in his early 1980s, living in retirement with his wife Patty at their ranch house in Cascade. I had known Gene since the 1960s when we worked together as printers in the composing room of the *San Francisco Chronicle* as members of San Francisco Typographical Union Local No. 21. Gene also worked as a typesetter in several commercial printing plants while living in San Francisco. Among them was Charles Faulk Typographers in downtown San Francisco where he served as "Chapel Chairman" (chief steward) for the union.

We were all excited by the Delano Grape Strike of the farmworkers in the 1960s in the Central Valley in efforts to successfully organize California agricultural workers. Gene and I collected about \$300 in donations from our fellow *Chronicle* printers, and one Saturday afternoon following work we took off for Delano to deliver this modest packet to the farm workers. We got there late at night and met a contingent of strikers in an empty packing shed, maintaining watch on any scab attempts to load grapes onto freight cars. We were well-received by these mostly Mexican-American and Filipino strikers. This led to a well-organized campaign by Bay Area International Telecommunication Union (ITU) printers to assist farm worker organizing and boycott support for several years, led by the newly-minted United Farm Workers union.

After several years in printing, Gene left the trade and worked for a time as a cable TV installer in the early years of cable in Sonoma County, Calif. He later moved to Denver and owned and operated an electrical repair shop that he sold

upon his retirement. With the proceeds he purchased a ranch house in Cascade, Mont., on a hillside overlooking the Missouri River to which he brought his second wife Patty.

Gene was born in Colorado on a small family cattle ranch. He helped his dad punch cattle during his growing years. During the Korean War he served in the U.S. Army, in Germany as I remember. Somewhere along the line he apprenticed to the printing trade and became a master craftsman in the typographical arts during its hot metal days.

We kept in touch during all these years through our retirements. Gene was active in the Veterans for Peace in Montana and at least once he and Patty joined in the annual demonstrations at Fort Benning, Ga. to protest the Army's training of death squads for South and Central American dictators.

One year after wintering in Ensenada, Baja California to fish, the Jacks stopped to see me in San Francisco on their way back to Montana. As luck would have it, there was a march up Market Street from the Embarcadero to San Francisco Civic Center in which the IWW had a contingent, the purpose of which I don't remember. I invited the Jacks to join us and Gene responded: "It'll be an honor."

During our email correspondence over the years I'd often bring him up to date about IWW activity. One time he informed me he had sent in his initial dues into IWW General Headquarters (GHQ), expressing pride in becoming a Wobbly, no matter how late in life. Last year he joined his Montana fellow workers for the first time in their commemoration of Frank Little in Butte and thoroughly appreciated the occasion.

Besides his wife Patty, Gene is survived by a son and daughter from an earlier marriage and some grandchildren.

Feature

Oregon Canvassers Continue Push For Unionization

By Shane Burley

Seven workers and union activists headed toward the office on Sept. 17, just before the morning shift began, debating how to enter. Should they all parade in together? What if lower management is out front smoking before the shift begins? Should they go in early, or wait until the day's canvassers are already inside?

They agreed to head in together in a show of solidarity, a few minutes before the bell rang. As the workers filed in the front door, with their union representatives in tow, management declared that outside people were not allowed to enter during business hours.

"Don't worry, we won't be long," said Jonathan Steiner, a representative for the United Campaign Workers (UCW), a project of the IWW. The workers and their union representatives entered and declared there was announcement to be made: they have joined a union and invited other workers to join them.

They work at Fieldworks, a get-out-the-vote shop that, with 30 to 40 canvassers at a time, is one of the largest political canvassing businesses in Portland, Ore., and the nation as a whole. They are the latest in a slew of Portland campaign workers to organize with UCW in recent months, from canvassers for marijuana legalization to fundraisers for organizations like the Planned Parenthood Action Fund and The Nature Conservancy.

The complaints of canvassers at Fieldworks sound familiar: a lack of transparency when it comes to decisions about canvassing locations and the organizations they are funded by, minimal say in workplace decisions, reports of wage theft and labor law non-compliance, and a lack of a living wage.

Workers have come out publicly as a minority union, meaning that the union is holding membership of less than half of the workplace and are not currently attempting an election through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). As is the case with other recent UCW canvassing shops, the high turnover rate and temporary nature of the work means that conventional union elections may not be viable. Instead, they chose to come out publicly and begin putting pressure on management with the hope that new recruits would see the power that this organization has in their workplace and would join the fight.

But the minority union stands out in one important respect: their workplace is funded by unions.

One of Fieldworks' major funders is Our Oregon, a progressive 501(c)(4) that receives its funding from local unions and progressive non-profits, such as the LGBT lobbying organization Basic Rights Oregon. The state's public employee unions are the main force behind Our Oregon. They do not publicly disclose their donors, yet the participation of certain unions and non-profits are no secret. Their board of directors includes staff from Services

Employees International Union (SEIU) 503, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Oregon Education Association, and the Oregon American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

The group's mission is to pass legislation such as marriage equality, increasing taxes on the wealthy and corporations, and defeating anti-union right-to-work laws. To this end, they hope to increase voter turnout in progressive and working-class areas of Portland. The most recent tax filings available for Our Oregon lists them as having spent around \$1.4 million on their various projects in 2012, which shows their relative size and the investment that Oregon's public sector unions have made in joint legislative lobbying.

Many of the canvassers say they were drawn to this work because they share these progressive values and saw it as a way to make a difference.

"Voting on local initiatives does change things," said Fieldworks canvasser Elliot Cheifetz. "Having people out there talking to strangers on these issues builds civil society, and it does educate people."

Yet Fieldworks' get-out-the-vote workers report some of the same workplace issues that plague street canvassers. Turnover is a primary complaint. Fieldworks does not have a formal quota system like many of its fundraising counterparts, but many of its workers report an "unofficial quota" of 21 voter registrations per day. Those who fall short are typically fired with no explanation.

"The fact that there are no official standards, or you are not told what the standards are going to be each individual day means you can always imagine yourself as behind regardless of your numbers," said Cheifetz. "So it's always in the back on your mind. There are people who don't even take their lunch break, because they are worried about meeting this undefined quota."

In addition, several workers have also alleged that their wages were stolen or that legally-required sick pay was withheld. Cheifetz said his paycheck for a pay period was short.

"I was just shocked when I realized I was being underpaid," he said. When he complained about the pay discrepancy he said, "their response was basically to condescend to me and to tell me I must be confused. That I just didn't know how taxes work." He persisted, showing proof of hours, and eventually had his wages returned, but he said his trust in his employer had been damaged.

Low pay is another complaint. The \$10.50 per hour wage Fieldworks canvassers receive—plus a \$10 gas card and a \$10 bonus for those who drive—is above the \$9.42 per hour that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s Living Wage Calculator estimates to be the living wage in Portland for a single adult, but below the \$19.57 per hour for an adult with one

dependent. Though the stereotype of canvass workers is often one of students without many expenses, workers say that many are parents trying to support families on this income.

After announcing the union campaign at the Fieldworks office on Sept. 17, workers stated their demands. First, they asked Fieldworks to comply with all labor laws, especially the paid sick leave ordinance of the City of Portland.

They also demanded an end to retaliation against unionizing workers—UCW has filed unfair labor practice complaints with the NLRB against Fieldworks over the firings of several workers who had stable voter registration numbers and were involved in the union campaign. Last, they asked for a negotiating meeting with the union after 72 hours.

In response, one of the owners, Lewis Granofsky, said that he had not heard any of these complaints before, but was willing to hear the workers and set up a meeting within three days. He noted that he had already been in talks with unions, including AFSCME, about organizing the field canvassers in Fieldworks nationally, though he said that any more in-depth information about this effort was "confidential."

Workers immediately reflected on this possible "partnership" between AFSCME and Fieldworks as a problem, both because of its lack of transparency and because of AFSCME's business relationship with Fieldworks.

As a major funder of the Our Oregon project, which in turn hires Fieldworks to register people to vote in key areas that are likely to vote for their important initiatives, AFSCME could have a conflict of interest. AFSCME is also listed as a regular client on Fieldworks' website, along with dozens of major unions and progressive non-profits.

"We're the workers here," said recently-fired Fieldworks canvasser Joseph Keesler. "Who's talked to us from AFSCME? Who's talked to us from anywhere else? I haven't seen these people. Who said you could represent me?"

The same workers and union representatives allege that in another conversation with Granofsky later that day, he noted that he wanted to keep the labor-management relationship smooth since the election was only six weeks away. UCW identified this as an important pressure point for the organization, since it ties directly to ability for workers to continue to "get out the vote" in key areas that are important for Our Oregon.

Fieldworks marks the third business to go public with the United Campaign Workers since its founding in June. Many of the workers that were involved with the organizing effort at the two previous locations have continued to stay active in union affairs, and several workers joined the staff of Fieldworks with the goal of unionizing.

As promised, management met with workers within 72 hours at the Laborers' Union Hall. They pledged to both provide correct and clear information to individual workers about the sick pay ordinance and to ban any retaliation against the workers for union activity. Granofsky also publicly declared that no worker would be fired for not meeting a quota. This tangible commitment caused a stir among workers previously unaffiliated with the organizing effort, who began to speak out about their situation and sign union cards, noted Steiner.

"A ball of excitement came over the room," said Steiner. "These were really big gains that the union was able to get at the table."

The owners also agreed to return to the negotiating table with counter-proposals to other demands from the union, namely



Fieldworks canvassers join the IWW. Photo: UCW
the \$15 per hour base pay, incentive pay, and some sort of protection for canvassers from assault or harassment when in the field.

When management did return with their formal responses to the rest of the union's demands, they did not even acknowledge these demands as being possible, according to workers present. Management did not budge on pay and would not acknowledge the alleged violations of wage and labor laws. UCW members also say that management additionally refused to recognize a union representative on-site for any worker disciplinary process or for morning announcements, citing that it is a "moot point" until the union is certified.

This would require the union to go through a regular NLRB election process, which would not allow for even enough time for certification before workers are laid off at the end of the election season. Their position as a minority union does not guarantee them the right to negotiate as the exclusive bargaining unit of the business, which means that management is under less legal requirement to negotiate. The decision to do so is instead instigated by the amount of action and pressure the workers organizing on the job can push, which can often force management into negotiations without any legal mandate.

The canvassing jobs were only available up until the mid-term elections. Workers hoped to see some of their demands met before the end of this term, but management may hold off on these until layoffs become mandatory. This makes long-term organizing at Fieldworks difficult, but it may lend to the long-term vision of UCW in general that sees campaign workers as a sector worth targeting broadly.

As workers got out the final push towards Election Day, many were informed of a possible continued employment opportunity with Fieldworks. These workers were to be bussed to Reno, Nev. to work towards criminal background checks for gun sales. When the workers arrived after their long shifts the night before most of the people who were promised a seat on the bus were denied, with management allegedly performing elaborate selection games to narrow the crowd down.

According to Deshawn Blakey, a Fieldworks employee who had been hired in the few days prior to the final voter push, the scene was one of outright chaos as workers lined up outside the bus and were chosen. "It felt like they had a cage full of new puppies and they were picking them out straight from the pen," described Blakey. "It was not how an organization should be run." Workers allege that a few of the last people crowded were offered \$50 for losing their jobs, though this was not distributed to the entire group of workers who were denied.

Our Oregon has a strong reputation in Oregon's progressive community and has a series of important battles ahead to maintain pay equity and collective bargaining in the state. The workers at Fieldworks say they want to support that effort, and the efforts of the public sector unions funding it, as much as they can.

This piece originally appeared on Nov. 4, 2014 in In These Times. It was reprinted with permission from the author.

Whole Foods Workers Demand Higher Wages And A Union

Continued from 1

announced that the company would be phasing out full-time positions for new hires. Meanwhile, workers say the company has forced them to shoulder more and more of the costs of their limited health benefits.

Whole Foods currently has over 100 stores in development. Case Garver, a buyer in the San Francisco store's Prepared Foods department, has seen enough of the doublespeak. "It seems like every six months they open up a brand new store," he stated, "while at the same time my manager turns around and says the company doesn't have enough money to give us 40 hours a week. We're tired of doing more with less."



Graphic: wfmunite.com

Azalia Martinez, a cashier at the store, relates that in addition to working full time for Whole Foods, going to school and fulfilling family obligations, she must take additional side jobs to make ends meet. "It's extremely hard," she said.

Despite the hardships, workers at the store know that we can win better wages by standing together. History proves that workers have the power to make change when we come together to fight for our interests. We are re-igniting a workers' movement where we have power: on the job. This is our movement, we are capable of victory, and we are worth it.

For more information, visit: <http://www.wfmunite.com>.

Feature

Union Harvests Major Victories For Farmworkers In Washington

By Tomás Alberto Madrigal

Familias Unidas por la Justicia, an independent farm labor union based in Burlington, Wash., has taken their labor struggle with employer Sakuma Brothers Farms, Inc. (Sakuma) to Skagit County Superior Court on six separate occasions to defend their labor rights. In all but one criminal case against their employer, the farmworkers have emerged victorious.

Since their formation in July 2013, the community of migrant berry pickers have done eight work stoppages in the Sakuma berry fields and launched a boycott of the berry products.

The union's triple-pronged campaign has cost the recalcitrant grower financially and has put to rest any claim to reason for Sakuma's adamant refusal to negotiate a union contract with the workers. The extent of Sakuma's continued retaliation has left a trail of litigation found in favor of the farmworkers.

Litigation

Early in the year the farmworkers settled a wage and hour class action lawsuit for a record \$850,000 to compensate the workers for missed lunch and rest breaks. Though the farmworkers settled with the grower, the Skagit County Superior Court has yet to make a decision about whether or not farmworkers who work for piece-rates are entitled to rest breaks. A ruling on this matter will affect hundreds of thousands of farmworkers in Washington.

Two of the lawsuits have sought injunctions against Sakuma's continued interference and retaliation of the farmworkers protected concerted activity. Though agricultural labor is exempt from the National Labor Relations Act, Washington State's Little Norris-La Guardia Act protects the concerted activity of any employee from their employer's interference and retaliation. Upon being sued for contempt of one of these injunctions for refusing to rehire and house the unionized farmworkers during this year's strawberry harvest, the grower quickly hired a handful of families the weekend before trial, making the criminal charges null.

Due to the litigation, Sakuma chose to withdraw an application for 438 H-2A

guest workers. Familias Unidas por la Justicia looked to its rank and file to submit letters of their intent to work at the farm if provided cabins, as was the prevailing practice, to prove that there was not a labor shortage for the harvest.

Two lawsuits sought to protect the farmworkers' rights as tenants of the grower's labor camps. The Skagit County Superior Court granted the injunctions, requiring the firm to follow all State regulations governing tenancy. The lawsuits came about because the grower had sent letters to the unionized farm workers informing them that they were not eligible for rehire because they had been absent and that the firm planned to no longer provide family units for the 2014 harvest season. This change in housing rules would have excluded the majority of the unionized farmworkers, and Judge Susan Cook was of the opinion that it was a clear case of retaliation for having gone on strike in 2013.

Work Stoppages

Familias Unidas por la Justicia engaged in seven work stoppages during the 2013 harvest season and one more during the 2014 harvest season. Three of those were strikes over the firing of union members Federico Lopez during the strawberry harvest, Ramon Torres during the blackberry harvest, and Cornelio Ramirez during the blueberry harvest in 2014. Two work stoppages were due to broken agreements that the farmworkers had negotiated with their employer: the union had proposed a piece-rate process that involved members of the union in price setting and the agreement was broken by company president Ryan Sakuma. The rest of the work stoppages were due to unfair and onerous piece-rates during the late blueberry and blackberry harvests.

Union Busting

From the very beginning of the labor dispute, Sakuma elected to hire union-busting consultants, including Rhett Searce—security consultant that was the subject of a California Labor Review Board violation where he had tasered a farmworker organizer in Ventura County

in 2012 during a strike; Hermelindo Escobedo—a local labor contractor who was quickly removed due to community pressure; Raul Calvo—a safety consultant who worked with Mario Vargas, a human relations consultant for closed audience and one-on-one meetings with union leadership and represented the firm during community appearances at public forums put on by the local Latino Civic Alliance; and John Segale—of Precision Public Relations, a PR firm that served Sakuma.

From the beginning Sakuma Brothers Farms received considerable support from Dan Fazio, head of the Washington Farm Labor Association, in their application for and defense of importing H-2A guest workers during an ongoing labor dispute. The firm also received financial support from the Washington Farm Bureau, who helped to fund a counter-boycott initiative under the slogan "I <3 Berries" led by a farm bureau member who was a teacher within a local school district. Sakuma's main fresh market client, Driscoll's, also provided resources for the firm to battle the boycott.

Boycott

The farmworker boycott campaign in 2013 was extremely successful in getting grocers in Bellingham and Seattle to pull the fruit from produce displays and store shelves. Many grocers and kitchens were completely unaware of the emerging labor struggle and boycott during the first stage of the boycott and were cooperative in removing Sakuma label fresh market berries. Even a Häagen-Dazs Market in Seattle's university district observed the boycott in 2013. Only those grocers with strong ties to the farm and one distributor refused to observe the boycott. The first boycott campaign gained publicity throughout the country when supporters took the issue to their grocers.

The second stage of the boycott campaign beginning in 2014 faced a more aggressive relabeling campaign on behalf of the grower. Initial strawberry flats, for



Photo: Familias Unidas por la Justicia

instance, were blank cardboard boxes with no label whatsoever. The firm worked with Driscoll's and distributors to re-label the fresh market berries multiple times throughout the season, which led the union to call for a boycott of Driscoll's berries in order to discourage the powerful client from backing the recalcitrant Sakuma Brothers Farms.

The 2014 boycott campaign was successful in securing the AFL-CIO Washington State Labor Council's endorsement, which also officially recognized Familias Unidas por la Justicia as a member union. The farmworker union was then able to secure the cooperation of two local grocers in publicly observing the berry boycott. The farmworkers union continued to meet with grocers in hopes they would follow suite in order to build public and economic pressure for the grower to negotiate a fair union contract with the union.

Familias Unidas por la Justicia has accomplished all of these labor victories on a shoestring budget heavily dependent upon the donations of their public supporters and the solidarity of multiple labor unions and social justice organizations, such as Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB) and Community to Community Development. Student-led boycott committees have emerged on multiple campuses, the strongest being the Western Washington University Students for Farm Worker Justice, with the growth of independent boycott committees in Seattle, Olympia, and in California.

Union leadership has maintained a public presence throughout the country, speaking at labor councils as far away as San Francisco, at the Food Sovereignty Prize ceremony in Des Moines, Iowa, and even securing the endorsement of the FIOB congress in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Toronto Harm Reduction Workers Organize With The IWW

Continued from 1

distribution for safer use of injection drugs. Before policy makers were ready to put aside stigma and ideology to adopt evidence-based practices proven to save lives and improve health and wellness, drug users were organizing themselves. They knew what needed to be done in order to protect themselves and their communities by sharing supplies and information about safer use. They formed formal and informal organizations to have each other's backs and protect each other against the HIV epidemic that was devastating their communities. These strategies are second nature to people who live under the weight of poverty, criminalization and the war on drugs, which is a war on drug users and working-class people.

Following the implementation of the first needle exchange programs in the 1980s, these efforts led to the more wide-scale adoption and funding of harm reduction programs. As these programs became larger and more established, new struggles emerged around the need for these services to use the knowledge and expertise of those with lived experience of drug use, homelessness and incarceration. The City of Toronto now has over 45 agencies distributing needle exchange supplies, all of which rely on the participation and labour of people who use drugs. But the struggle continues. While trying to keep ahead of a never-ending barrage of cuts, clawbacks, and conservative attacks, front line workers' focus has primarily been on the provision of services, and not on their own working conditions. Before the THRWU initiated its organizing campaign,

many workers didn't see themselves as real workers. Many workers were reluctant to advocate for improvements in their working conditions; instead, they were made to feel lucky to "have a job," they said. This, despite the fact that front line workers are the experts that make harm reduction work.

Neoliberalism in the form of healthcare spending cuts and the implementation of corporate management structures has created new challenges for workers and service users. An increasing demand for post-secondary education, where previously lived experience was the only job requirement, has led to a shift in workplace culture. New pressures for the intensification of invasive data collection and reporting have taken workers away from necessary frontline work. This professionalization has watered down harm reduction work and has created a class of workers who are not seen as "actual workers" by their colleagues in the workplace. The THRWU is organizing to address this inequality and to improve services.

In the context of the "War on Drugs," in which our fellow workers are the casualties, an organizing campaign of this nature is exciting. The THRWU is setting itself up to be a powerful voice for harm reduction workers in workplaces as well as in broader political struggles. THRWU worker-organizer Zoë Dodd summed up the general feeling of the union: "This is a very exciting moment for us as workers, and for harm reduction programs worldwide. We are ready and excited to join the fight to reduce the harms associated with work."

IWW Resurgence In Bellingham, Washington

Continued from 1

Members are planning to host an IWW Organizer Training 101 workshop in 2015, and helping plan a centennial commemoration of the 1916 Everett Massacre, 60 miles down the highway toward Seattle.

The Bellingham IWW was invited to send a delegate to the Northwest Washington Central Labor Council (NWWCLC) monthly meetings. Three members attended the October meeting and were warmly received. Council President Mark Lowry opened the meeting by introducing the IWWs. He told the assembled delegates from 14 unions that he didn't care if the IWW was "red, orange, green, or purple. We should welcome every union that has the working peoples' backs. [The] IWW is a great addition to the Bellingham labor movement." After the Wobs gave a brief description of the IWW, a delegate from another union said "Why in hell isn't our union like that?" When one fellow worker said that the IWW has neither paid officers, other than the General Secretary-Treasurer (GST), nor a president who sets policy but instead has a volunteer General Executive Board that is elected annually and has total rank-and-file control, there were nods and smiles among the other delegates.

Bellingham is a coastal town of nearly 80,000 located 20 miles south of the international border between Seattle in the United States and the Vancouver, Canada metro area. The Cascade Mountains rise just to the east. The area is home to Western Washington University, two petroleum refineries, an aluminum smelter, boatbuilding, and a wide variety

of industries. The largest employer is the regional hospital run by the "non-profit" healthcare giant Peace Health, the scene of successful unionization this year. With the demise of the pulp mill, retail is the biggest industry. Low-wage food service makes up a large portion of the job market. Until recently Bellingham has been a quiet place with relatively few labor struggles or campaigns. That has changed since the hospital workers have organized into Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 99NW. To the dismay of hospital administrators, yard signs supporting the union have popped up all over town. The struggle of the underdog farmworkers in the independent Familias Unidas por la Justicia union at Sakuma Brothers Farms south of town is another focus.

A vibrant IWW branch was chartered in Bellingham in the 1980s. Two worker cooperatives, the Fairhaven Cooperative Flour Mill and Blackberry Press, carried shop cards. Bellingham Wobs walked a few picket lines and attempted to organize the mostly-Vietnamese workers at the Mount Baker Mushroom Farm. One member went to Chicago to serve as GST. Some members migrated to eastern Washington's apple orchards during fall harvest and agitated for the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union 110 there, gaining some small victories and publishing a mimeographed newsletter. The GMB petered out as members moved, got involved in political movements, focused on families, or grew disenchanted with sectarian infighting that roiled IWW then. Bellingham IWW is sure to enliven the union scene as the branch grows and gets busy organizing.

In December We Remember

Anniversary Of The First Earth First!-IWW Local #1 Meeting

By Steve Ongerth

Below are the minutes of the initial IWW Local #1 meeting, called by Judi Bari 25 years ago on Nov. 19, 1989. They clearly show that Local #1 was intended to be a serious and genuine workers organization. Workers from Georgia Pacific and Pacific Lumber attended, and activity was primarily focused on point-of-production issues, such as the Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) spill in the Georgia Pacific mill in Fort Bragg, Calif. (which is the campaign that inspired the official chartering of Local #1 in the first place), the export of Louisiana-Pacific cut logs to Mexico, or the hostile takeover of the Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO) by Maxxam Inc. Already, Local #1 planned solidarity unionism strategies, such as providing services for International Woodworkers of America (IWA) Local #3-469 members affected by cutbacks in services by their local. The IWW had returned (officially) to timber country! Grammatical corrections have been made, as well as a few clarifications, but otherwise these minutes are published as originally typed.

Minutes of the founding meeting of IWW Local #1

The Mendocino-Humboldt General Membership Branch of the IWW held our first meeting on Sunday, Nov. 19, 1989. Fourteen (out of 24) members came.

Structure

We set up our basic structure as follows: Judi Bari was elected Corresponding Secretary and Anna Marie Stenberg was elected Financial Secretary. They were instructed to open a bank account and keep track of dues and other paperwork. Other than these utilitarian positions, we will have no officers. Decisions will be made by the members at the meetings. If events occur between meetings that require action, temporary decisions (subject to ratification at the next meeting) will be made by the Entertainment Commit-

tee. Membership on the Entertainment Committee is voluntary, and the people who volunteered were Mike Koepf, Treva VandenBosch, Judi Bari, Anna Marie Stenberg, Pete Kayes, and Bob Cooper.

Work So Far

The work of Our Branch was described: We are a General Membership Branch (GMB) and will take on whatever issues the members want, especially issues related to our workplaces. But so far our activities have been centered around providing support for timber workers who are fighting their employers' destruction of forests, jobs, and working conditions. We hope to be a bridge between environmentalists and timber workers and help bring about community understanding of the workers' problems.

Pete Kayes, employee of Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO), in Scotia, talked about the failed attempt by workers to form an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) and buy the company back from corporate raider Charles Hurwitz. Pete also gave out copies of the rank-and-file newsletter *Timberlyin'* that he and others produce and distribute at the Scotia mill.

Treva VandenBosch, recently retired employee of Georgia Pacific (G-P) Corporation in Fort Bragg, told about being doused with PCBs in the G-P mill and receiving no help from the company or union (IWA Local #3-469, AFL-CIO). She walked off the job and single-handedly picketed the plant, eventually hooking up with Anna Marie and Mike (now also IWW members), who helped get the story out. The plant was finally closed for three days

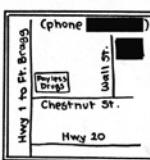
IWW Branch Meeting

Sunday Nov. 19

at Wall Street, Ft. Bragg
4:00PM - Meeting
5:30PM - Singing (Bring songs and instruments)
6:30PM - Potluck Dinner
7:30PM - Movie "The Wobblies" (Showing at the Community Center, Mendocino)

AGENDA

This is the First meeting of the newly formed Mendocino/Humboldt Branch of the IWW. We will elect officers, report on projects, and plan for the future.



PLEASE BRING your Wobbly membership book and Nov. dues money
The business meeting from 4:30PM is for members only. The singing, potluck and movie is for everyone. Bring a friend.

Judi Bari's hand-drawn meeting leaflet.

handcuffs for distributing a leaflet calling for fellow IWA Local #3-469 members to vote "no" on a proposed union dues increase. IWA shop stewards distributing pro-dues increase leaflets were not interfered with by the company. The IWA has not provided Julie with any support on her arrest and charges. We are asking all Wobs to come to Julie's trial, and we have been helping her with her defense. Ten people showed up to support Julie at her arraignment.

Future Projects

IWA Local #3-469 Business Rep. Don Nelson has threatened to cut union services such as help with unemployment and workers comp, because the members voted down his dues increase. We decided that if he does this, the Wobs will provide for free any service he eliminates for G-P millworkers. Mike (Koepf), Treva, Anna Marie, Judi, Page (Prescott), Pete (Kayes), and Darryl (Cherney) volunteered for this project.

We also decided that, sometime after the holidays, our Branch will publish a

newspaper by and for timber workers, to be distributed area-wide. Mike volunteered to be coordinator and Pete, Judi, Kay (Rudin) and Darryl volunteered to work on it.

We also decided to work on a sea blockade of Louisiana Pacific (L-P) when they begin shipping North Coast redwoods to Mexico in January.

Miscellaneous

Judi announced that the Michigan Wobs had voted to donate \$500 to our organizing drive. We are impressed and appreciative of this show of solidarity. We voted to reimburse Judi and Anna Marie for phone and travel expenses incurred organizing the union so far.

We discussed the question of publicity for our activities, since several newspapers and magazines have already expressed interest in writing about us. We decided there was a danger of the press doing cutesy articles before we even had a chance to do the groundwork for organizing. We decided that we would not give in-depth interviews to the press about our IWW activities until we decide collectively that we are ready.

The business meeting then adjourned, and we sang Wobbly and Earth First! songs, accompanied by guitars, fiddles, and banjos. We then went to Mendocino to see the documentary film, "The Wobblies."

Dues

Union dues are \$3 (low income) or \$5 (regular). If you did not pay your November dues at the meeting, please see Judi or mail them to the (local IWW branch).

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Sunday, Dec. 17, 1989 at 4 p.m. Bring your red membership book and December dues money. We hope to have more time for singing this time, so bring instruments and songs.

**Judi Bari,
Corresponding Secretary**

Review

The Wild Wisdom Of Weeds

Blair, Katrina. The Wild Wisdom of Weeds: 13 Essential Plants for Human Survival. White River Jct., VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014. Paperback, 384 pages, \$29.95.

By John MacLean

"All nature's plants are wild and free and remind us that we have everything we need." - Katrina Blair

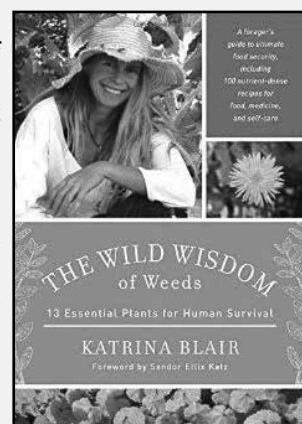
Katrina Blair, in her book "The Wild Wisdom of Weeds," writes that humans have had most of the "wildness" in themselves "refined out." She adds that we have become "enslaved" to a "Big System" and have come to accept our "domestication as being normal and civilized." For Blair, what has been done can be dumped off of all of our backs, and "wild weeds [have been] sent as messengers of help." She writes: "The wild weed-eating humans became revolutionaries and little by little started unwinding the BS. The Big System was never born with a heart of its own, so it quickly collapsed and composted into the bosom of the Earth where we can now see the smiling flowers of dandelion, mallow, plantain, purslane, lamb's-quarters, mustard, thistle, knotweed, amaranth, grass, dock, clover, and chickweed."

These 13 "global plants" Blair focuses on are freely available, even in most places changed by human activity, and can be used as "food and medicine." Many of these plants are wrongly seen as noxious and invasive, or non-native aliens, fit solely for "eradication." Blair classes them as primary and secondary succession plants, as "nature's first line of action for recreating stabilized fertility in areas of disturbed ground." She writes that succession plants "are one of nature's

brilliant ecological tactics to insure the continuation of life." These "weeds bring to light the basic concept that the whole world is a place where we can be nourished, embody health, know security, and be free to live a quality of life."

Blair has spent much time in recent years trying to change the land management and "weed policies" of her hometown, Durango, Colo. She sees this activity as guided by an experience of "total euphoria" she had as a youngster on Haviland Lake, in the southwestern part of the state, among wild flowers. She writes the "gifting economy is the economy of nature" and that it seems astounding a human economy based on extraction, inequality, and wage slavery should develop given the daily appearance of the sun. Our bodies require "a rainbow of trace minerals," our "physical beauty" is held up by them, and all around us "wild supplements are free and available to anyone who is interested." Blair gives us much advice on how to harvest and keep weeds, as green powders, over winter, and also on how to use the 13 global plants in sprouting and growing of microgreens. She states plainly: "Health is our given right, but we have to choose it very specifically and consciously in our modern times."

The 13 global plants Blair looks into are some of the "best teachers in how to heal people, heal the Earth, and share their abundance." Only good things can come from listening to the land and allowing it to "be our primary guide in every deci-



Graphic: amazon.com

sion." These "wild weeds" are expert at "refertilizing and remineralizing the soil," and if allowed they can do the same for our bodies. Nothing living is furthered through the continued application of toxic herbicides, Blair writes that when "we embody the emotional frequencies of anger, hatred, or irritations of an intruder in the garden, it is not good for personal health." She calls for a collective "release" of "outdated practices," and collaboration "toward the common good for all."

When we eat "wild foods" directly from the land "we gain superior nourishment and energy with the least amount of effort," but when we consume processed and packaged food our "senses" and "brilliance" are numbed and dulled. Blair recommends the "lost art" of eating as wild animals do from the Earth. She writes: "The wild weed medicine helps us let go of fear, fear of not having enough money, fear of survival, fear of scarcity, fear of not being free, fear of not having enough time, fear of not belonging, fear of change, fear of letting go, fear of being in control, fear of allowing, fear of forgiveness, and fear of unworthiness." In becoming wilder "we begin to care more deeply" and participate in "a revolution of quality of life for all beings."

The final section of the book is called "The Wild Thirteen," and contains chapters on each plant, complete with histories, remedies, and recipes. Blair writes that it "is good to remember that when food is our medicine, we avoid getting sick," and

you could add to this that it all begins with a healthy ecosystem. A human body is comprised of 22 essential amino acids, 14 of these are produced internally, eight must be consumed as food, and they are referred to as a complete protein. The seeds of amaranth, whole dandelion, from flower to root, young grasses, lamb's-quarter, and clover, when combined with grains, contain all eight amino acids. According to Blair, mallow and plantain are a food and medicine in one; the latter she describes as "perfect." Purslane and knotweed keep water local, and prevent erosion; the maligned thistle excels at breaking up and aerating compacted soil, and balancing acidic states, which in the human body can cause disease. Blair recommends a simple taste test when foraging: start with small amounts, always consider where you are harvesting, and dry fresh plants "thoroughly" and store so as to avoid mold.

In closing, Blair writes about reconnecting with our "core survival instincts" with the land and its plants. Also, she wishes to reintroduce us to our wilderness and to a capacity to trust the gifting economy. Unlike most of our experiences with the "Big System," the common act of foraging can give us "peace and confidence," and can "help us feel at home on planet Earth." Blair's belief that the wild 13 can help us adapt to global warming is a reach, but there is no doubt as to the value of these incredible plants. In reading this book it reminded the reviewer of how the North County Food Alliance, a worker-directed IWW shop in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, can serve as a model for us in terms of its ability to orient people toward natural economy.

Wobbly Arts**A Whole Paycheck**

By FW JP Wright

Kentucky GMB 11/14

Listen online: <https://soundcloud.com/john-paul-wright/a-whole-paycheck>

Fellow Workers!

Well this Whole Foods business, you might think it mighty fine!
but there's somethin' I bet you didn't know!
We workers get paid less than a living wage,
and the bosses think our union needs to go.

A whole paycheck! A whole paycheck!
That's what it would cost for me!
A whole paycheck, a whole paycheck
if were to buy groceries!

Well let me tell you something that you outta know,
while i'm icin' up your wild caught Icelandic fish.

I can't afford half the stuff you got in cart,

A living wage and a union is my wish!

If your coming here to buy some ethical food,
or your a supporter of this 365 brand,

or maybe your town doesn't have a co-op anymore,
because these big stores are spreading cross the land!

If you think your hands are clean, because your buyin' green,
we whole foods workers have news for you!

We can't afford the products that we sell,
a week of labor for me is a full cart for you!



Photo: Zoe Meyers

Commentary On Women Workers' History, Chapter 77By Jerzy Smokey Dymny,
Vancouver Island Branch

While it's nice to see Molly Jackson acknowledged alongside Florence Reese in the comic "Women Workers' History," titled "Which Side Are You On?" which appeared on page 4 of the November *Industrial Worker* (IW), it was in fact Jackson's composition "I Am a Union Woman," written in 1930, that led to the creation of Reese's "Which Side Are You On?"

It's sad to see the radicals in history being sidelined, while the middle-of-the-roaders get famous.

What many people fail to connect in this history is that Jackson was the sister of Jim Garland and half-sister of Sara Ogan Gunning; together they were a powerhouse folk-singing family who sang the local traditional ballads and then composed songs of their own. Their labor-related songs are well documented in U.S. political folk history. They sang and wrote songs for decades.

The comic in the IW states that "Which Side Are You On?" is Reese's "best known song." This is incorrect. It is her ONLY song. She was not from a folk-singing family, and this song was copied from Jackson, which was written the previous year, 1930. In Harlan County it would have been well-known since the Jackson/Gunning/Garland trio was organizing all out with the National Miners' Union (NMU). Reese assuredly had heard the song.

In "Leadbelly is a Hard Name" (American Folksong, New York, NY, 1961 [reprint of 1947 edition], p. 10.), Woody Guthrie said:

"Aunt Molly Jackson, [and] her relatives from the fascist country of Harlan County, Kentucky, all come to Leadbelly's house almost every day...Aunt Molly Jackson would sing us an hour or two of bloody Harlan County songs of organizing the coal miners to beat the thugs of old Sheriff Blair. Molly told tales from her life as a mountaineer midwife, sung us the songs that she used to make the sweethearts lose their bashfulness, the husband and the wife go back to their bed, the lonesome ones take up a new heart, and the older ones to be in body and action as quick, as funny, as limber and as wise as the young'uns coming up."

When Jackson wrote "I am a Union Woman," the NMU was being red-baiting by the authorities because someone on the national executive was a communist. The words to her song make this clear. In her own introduction to her song, Jackson also describes her union being "sold out" by John L. Lewis.

She talked about the writing of her song on tape for the Library of Congress, and it was later reprinted in John Gre-

enway's "American Folksongs of Protest":

"I remember it was the 16th morning of October, nineteen hundred and thirty. My sister's little girl Flossie Doolin was goin' around the field to a soup kitchen where that we had emptied in the spring, in April, all our canned stuff that we had canned up and every bit of food we had, we threw it all together to make soup & try to save the lives of the children, when the miners was blacklisted, 1100 of them, for joining the United Mine Workers of America & John L. Lewis had promised that he would see to us if the miners was blacklisted. Because the coal miners [the owners] had made a pledge with each other they'd never work another union man. And John L. Lewis sold us out in nineteen & twenty-five and the union was broken. So these children was going to the soup kitchen. And all the tops of their little



Graphic: Mike Konopacki

feet was busted open from the cold wind and you could track'em from the blood runnin' down their toes. They's barefooted & wearin' little thin cotton shirts and them all ragged and tore. And so they waked me and I went to the door and I asked my sister's little girl, Flossie, I said, 'What're you doin' with these children out here in the cold rain and them all naked and barefooted?' And she said, 'Aunt Molly, some of these children have not had a bite to eat since day before yesterday and I'm going to try to get'em a warm bowl of soup at the soup kitchen.' And my own little son, Henry Jackson, he said, 'They won't have anything this morning, only gravy and corn bread,' he said. 'Can't you fix me a bite o' somethin', ma?' 'N' I said, 'Henry, you know there's not a teaspoon of salt.' I said, 'According to my leadership, we all put the last tea-spoonful of salt & soda even, it's all out there. You go and fare with the others. If they have anything in that soup kitchen, it's for everybody,' I said. So, he went on, and I sat down at the dining room table and with the pains in my heart from the condition, as I often do, I composed a song of the condition of the people, which is the only kind of a song that is a folk song, is what the folks composes out of their own really lives. Out of their sorrow, 'n' out of their happiness & all."

I Am A Union Woman

©Aunt Molly Jackson, 1930

I am union woman, as brave as I can be. Em Am Em

I do not like the bosses & the bosses don't like me. Am Em B7 Em

Join the N.M.U. Join the N.M.U.

Em B7 Em //

Join the N.M.U. Join the N.M.U.

I was raised in old Kentucky, Kentucky

What Normal People Buy (Consumer Picking Warehouse Blues)

By Walter Beck

They buy Eddie Bauer diaper bags for their babies
And porcelain pagoda water fountains for their dogs,
They get masks for their kids
Made out of 100% cardboard.

They exercise on Indian made yoga mats
And wrap themselves in 500 thread count Egyptian sheets.

They buy Paula Deen pots
And Rachel Ray skillets
Wrapped in black plastic,
Like they were dirty magazines
Instead of celebrity-endorsed cookware.

They defend themselves
While fighting breast cancer
With their pink painted pepper spray guns;

Nothing says find a cure
Like a face full of Oleoresin Capsicum.

They fall asleep on iPod pillows
Softly pumping out adult alternative,
They claim it keeps them young.

All of it picked and packed by people
They'd never give the time of day to.

that the Reese sisters never wrote a song again that I can find; while Jackson, Gunning and Garland have left their indelible imprint all over folk history. It's too bad that the radicals get sideswiped by middle-of-the-roaders who write most of the histories. Jackson died in poverty in California in 1960.

Which Side Are You On?

Tune: "I Am a Union Woman" Aunt Molly Jackson.

Verses 1 to 3 are Reese's originals from 1931, UMWA Kentucky miners' strike.
Later verses by folk process. Last three verses ©Scottish singer Dick Gaughan.

Come all of you good workers, good news to you I'll tell
Of how the good old union has come in here to dwell
Which side are you on? Which side are you on? (x2) (v.1)

My daddy was a miner he's now in the air and sun
He'll be with you fellow workers until the battle's won. (original v.7)

If you go up to Harlan County, there is no neutral there.
You'll either be a union man or a thug for J.H. Blair. (original v.5)

O workers can you stand it? O tell me how you can?

Will you be a crummy scab or lend us all a hand? (used to be "will you be a man")

Don't scab for the bosses, don't listen to their lies,
Us working folks don't have a chance unless we organize,

My mother was a miner and I'm a miner's daughter,
I'll stand with this old union come hell or come high water,

So, shoulder to shoulder in Union we shall stand,
We'll beat the bosses and the scabs, so come and lend a hand,

Come all of you good people, you women and you men,
Once more our backs are to the wall, under attack again.

We've fought a million battles to defend our hard won rights,
We're going to have to fight again and I ask you here tonight:

It's time for a decision and you really have to choose,
Support the One Big Union or the next in line is you.



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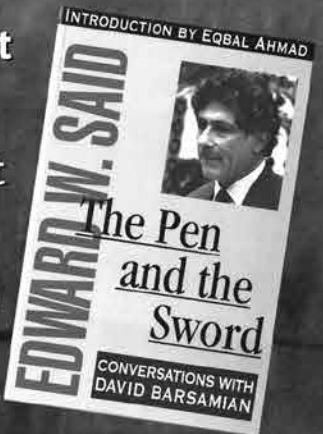
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Analysis

"What Then Are We To Do?": Understanding Co-ops And The IWW

By x363930

Could cooperatives usher in the next American Revolution? Historian, political economist, activist, and writer Gar Alperovitz argues that they could. I heard Alperovitz speak this past October at the Annual Membership Meeting of the natural and organic grocer, La Montañita Co-op (LMC) in Albuquerque, N.M. I was interested to learn if Alperovitz could offer some insight that would aid the IWW in its efforts to promulgate worker-owned cooperatives under the 2014 revision of co-op rules in our Constitution. I also wanted to observe the reaction that this speaker would receive from a consumer co-op, as not all co-ops are created equal.

La Montañita Co-op General Manager Terry Bowling prefaced Alperovitz's talk by stressing the need to see the cooperative movement within a larger context. "We are not the same co-op that we were 10 to 30 years ago," Bowling said. LMC has grown to six locations in three cities across northern New Mexico. Still this operation is small potatoes compared with the fierce competition swooping in from the likes of Whole Foods, Sprouts, Walmart, etc. The National Cooperative Grocers Association, representing 143 co-ops with 190 stores, made \$1.6 billion in 2013. However, co-op sales growth is on the decline while competition has increased. Painting the landscape within which co-ops operate, Bowling went on to explain that the retail food industry grosses \$600 billion a year. Natural and organic foods grossed \$100 billion, eclipsing \$70 billion in soft drink sales. Corporations have taken note and are competing. Whole Foods alone grossed \$10 billion last year. Sprouts, a California-based chain, has 167 stores and is planning to leverage capital to open 55 more in the next two years. Could Alperovitz offer some historical insight from his 50 years of activism and scholarship that could provide LMC and co-ops like it with a winning strategy taking things "to the next level" of development?

Gar Alperovitz opened his meeting by praising the co-op. "I come not to speak but to learn what the hell is going on," he said. "I don't know if you know how good you are." He was referring to LMC's community-building initiatives that include a Veterans' Farmer Project, an annual giving tree and the La Montañita (LAM) loan program available to farmers, ranchers and *acequia* associations (*acequias* are community-managed irrigation ditches first built by the Spanish during the colonial period). The LAM fund has helped to seed the Sweetgrass Beef Cooperative. LMC also worked to connect growers with excess produce to the regional food bank. Notably, the co-op also provides an 18 percent discount to members who volunteer at the co-op or in other community organizations and non-profits. Alperovitz took interest in learning about practical, grassroots work rather than theoretical or ideological projects.

Questioning the system

Alperovitz's talk highlighted a change in awareness that has occurred on two levels. On the first level is a loss of faith in the economic and political systems at an unprecedented scale. Citing public opinion polls, he noted that in the six years since the Great Recession, there is a general sense that things are really wrong on a systemic level. "As a historian, never in my life has this occurred," Alperovitz claimed. He also pointed to worsening socioeconomic trends over the last 30 to 40 years (the neoliberal era) that indicate social decline. Readers will be familiar with the trends of growing income inequality and poverty. He stated that if the United States were to utilize the global standard to measure poverty as one-half the median wage, then 70 million people would be under the poverty line in the United States, with a higher percentage of poverty in communities of color. Arriving to Albuquerque from Praxis Peace Institute's Economics of Sustainability Conference in San Francisco, Alperovitz pointed out that the dramatic climate change trends correlate with economic trends. The trends also apply to the decline in civil liberties. Alperovitz also mused on the expansion of war in Syria. He explained that in many senses, people have the sense that things are out of control or that they are being controlled by people who are doing things we don't want to be done. In short, "there is a lot of pain" and not a lot of answers as to why or what to do. Alperovitz said that the problem he was describing is "capitalism or corporate capitalism," but that the power of the state to regulate it does not exist.

New Economy Movement

A second level of change in awareness that Alperovitz described was what he calls the "New Economy Movement." Composed of all ages but especially young people, this movement is working to change the economic system from the grassroots up. He pointed to a variety of models. One was the recent municipalization of the Boulder, Colo. energy supply in a forced buyout from Xcel Energy Inc. (although this bucks a 20-plus year trend of deregulation and corporate monopolization of energy, this strikes me as socialized energy rather than cooperativized). Another example was a campaign in Richmond, Calif. to use eminent domain to buy up and then forgive mortgage debt. Having visited Mondragon Cooperatives in Spain, Richmond's Green Party Mayor Gayle McLaughlin has also publicly stated support for worker co-ops as a path out of poverty and unemployment. The Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, Ohio are democratizing wealth in a low income African-American neighborhood and have been the inspiration for Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi. Alperovitz mentioned the growing public banking movement and the fact that credit unions are a one person-one vote bank model capitalized at \$1 trillion in the United States. Alperovitz illustrated the case of how cities like Atlanta, Denver and the Twin Cities have implemented community land trusts (CLTs) to recapture increases in land value around newly-built transit stations. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) can be a code word for gentrification but CLTs have the potential to socialize urban land and prevent gentrification. The common thread of all these models, according to Alperovitz, is that they change who gets to own wealth in a way that is not state socialism. These are experiments in democratizing ownership—"small scale and community based, at least at the outset." These projects are the outgrowth of a lack of answers from those in power in response to increasing pain levels that they are responsible for creating.

"The labor movement is dead"

While Alperovitz was unashamed to champion worker co-ops to the audience of

consumer co-op members, his views are quite divergent from the Wobbly perspective on the question of labor. Citing the drop in organized labor rates from a high point in the 1950s of 34 percent down to 11 percent presently (6 percent for the private sector), the speaker concluded that "the labor movement is dead." He added, "There needs to be a new institutional base for progressive politics or nothing." This New Economy Movement is the base he sees for democratizing wealth although he admits it will require a sophisticated development to take it to a new scale. Alperovitz did not indicate how cooperatives could compete with or gain control of capitalist resources, nor what would happen to workers employed within capitalist enterprises and how they could contest ownership of the products of their own labor and the means of production.

He also did not elaborate on the extent to which hostile takeovers or eminent domain strategies could be effective in expropriating energy and financial holdings to a larger scale without organizing and direct action at the point of production.

Fun Times in Cleveland Again!

Gar Alperovitz elaborated on the model of the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, inspired by the Mondragon Cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. Evergreen was founded in a very poor, black neighborhood of 40,000 people. Unemployment there is 40 percent, childhood poverty is over 50 percent and the median family income is \$20,000. The nearby Cleveland Clinic and Case Western Reserve University made \$3 billion in annual purchases but bought nothing from the neighborhood. Evergreen seized on this and identified the hospital and university as anchor institutions. These non-profit institutions are not going to leave and they require goods and services that can be directly anchored to local co-ops in the surrounding low-income communities. Currently, Evergreen provides laundry services, solar energy and hydroponic vegetables. A secondary stage allowed anchorage of co-ops by other co-ops.

Power and responsibility

Alperovitz rounded out the night by putting a challenge to his audience. "You actually have power and responsibility [to] lay the basis for real politics with the possibility to transform systems." He shared a series of reflections related to this challenge. First, that it is imperative to come to the conclusion that is emerging among the poor, working-class and climate activists about the need for system change. Second, that it is important to take inspiration from the struggles of the past. Alperovitz told the crowd that he is inspired by the civil rights workers of the 1930s and 1940s. While acknowledging that no one is getting lynched over co-ops, he pointed out that in those decades it was harder to do the work than in subsequent decades. Third, the direction that he outlined suggests a more sophisticated, advanced and political approach to building cooperatives. Co-ops of the 1960s and 1970s were very political but failed at business. Then in the 1980s and 1990s, they became all about business and no politics. There is now the prospect of a new integration.

Unanswered questions

Despite a thorough question and answer period with the audience, a few questions did not get answered and contradictions remain. The biggest questions related to labor and unions. Alperovitz's presence was a sign that LMC is open to hearing about worker co-ops but starting wages at the co-op are lower than at Whole Foods. A traditional management structure exists as opposed to shop-floor democracy. According to an anonymous source in the local labor movement, the co-



La Montañita's Co-op Distribution Center.

Photo: cooperativegrocer.coop

op has a history of union busting. In 2004-2005, workers faced retaliation when they reached out to area unions about wages, benefits and a hard-handed management style. In response, LMC hired the area's leading union-busting attorney. Labor activists then formed Cooperative Members for Cooperative Principles. This group sought to elect pro-worker candidates to the co-op's board who could attempt to make internal policy changes. This group was short-lived and could not identify enough candidates to run. A 2005-2006 union drive built a strong organizing committee within LMC's flagship Nob Hill store. While the committee never broke into the other locations, it had strong participation from workers in most departments at the store. Management targeted a lead organizer and the effort fell apart shortly thereafter. While LMC now offers benefits, even to part-timers, wages remain low and one co-op worker reported that a blame culture exists among management at her store. The IWW has witnessed its fair share of hypocrisy by co-ops elsewhere in the United States. Consider the response to the active campaign at Citizen's Co-op in Gainesville, Fla. or the 2012 firing of Fellow Worker Ryan Gaughan by New Seasons Co-op in Portland, Ore. Another odd note was that LMC has entered into a partnership with Whole Foods to market chile ristras in stores outside New Mexico. Why not coordinate to instead corner the market and distribute exclusively to allied co-ops? Another issue was timing. Alperovitz has over 50 years of experience in social change movements. He alluded to a 30-year time frame for the New Economy Movement to blossom. A member of the crowd urgently commented that the window for addressing climate change is closing much sooner.

Conclusions

Gar Alperovitz's work on the New Economy Movement presents some exciting models of how to democratize wealth and move "Beyond Corporate Capitalism & State Socialism." The capacity of models like Evergreen to build and democratize wealth offers something not covered in the IWW Organizer Training 101. It also offers a model for organizing among the unemployed and underemployed. Likewise, community land trusts are a model outside the traditional IWW focus on the workplace. Perhaps these could serve as a model for Wobbly-style, neighborhood-based housing syndicalism. I encourage IWW members to study and analyze these models further, perhaps in conjunction with the IWW Survey and Research Committee (SRC). The website <http://www.community-wealth.org> is a good starting point. An assessment of whether or not and how to partner with truly worker self-managed co-ops and activists within the New Economy Movement should also be considered. However, this does not strike me as "The Next American Revolution" on its own. It does not invalidate the need for One Big Union to abolish the wage system and democratize capital currently under corporate and state control. Nor should Wobblies stray away from strategizing on how to confront exploitation and abuses that occur within consumer cooperatives and all workplaces that are not worker-controlled.

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The IWW formed the International Solidarity Commission to help the union build the worker-to-worker solidarity that can lead to effective action against the bosses of the world. To contact the ISC, email solidarity@iww.org.

Solidarity In Hong Kong, Brazil And Spain

By Florian H., William B., J. Pierce, and Anders M. of the International Solidarity Commission (ISC)

To support the protests in Hong Kong the ISC signed the petition of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) demanding an end to the violence against the protesters. The struggle continues in the financial district of Hong Kong.

On the other side of the world we grieve for Didi together with our dear fellow workers in Brazil:

The Industrial Workers of the World wish to express our solidarity with Central Sindical e Popular (CSP Conlutas-Brasil) in sorrow at the death of Dirceu "Didi" Travesso. He was a labor leader of international renown and was especially known for his labor activities in São Paulo. He will be sorely missed.

In Madrid several unions within the Red & Black Coordination met recently and the ISC sent a warm "Hello" to the syndicalists:

The International Solidarity Commission (ISC) sends to all our comrades and fellow workers here a warm greeting on behalf of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW is proud to be a close friend and supporter of the Red & Black Coordination and our hopes are that this body will grow powerful and ambitious.

At the present moment, the criminals in many of our countries are focused on stealing their lucre from the budgets of public services. They re-write the laws to swindle the sanitation workers, utility workers, and office employees out of their wages, benefits, and pensions. They cripple the public schools and government hospitals in order to create customers for private, for-profit schools and hospitals. They "reform" the patrimony of a people



Graphic: pstugaucho.blogspot.com

to dispossess them of their land and their nationalized industries.

Apart from government, they're focused on increasing consumer debt and raising prices while lowering expectations and living standards to the absolute minimum. The slave masters have been so busy, so focused on their financial schemes, that they have not noticed the new society being built around them.

When they finally look up and see this new world, they will not be able to comprehend it. Their slaves will have combined and pushed them aside (if they are lucky). Their money changing and numbers games will have collapsed. Their control over armies, industries, and institutions will have faded. And everywhere—in the streets, in town squares, from the tops of tall buildings, in front yards and aloft on balconies, plastered to factory, facility, and university gates—they will behold the Red and Black banner...

The IWW wishes you all a productive and fun conference and looks forward to gluing ourselves tighter to the Red & Black Coordination and all of our revolutionary sister unions for the many battles ahead. Solidarity Forever!

Email the ISC at solidarity@iww.org.

NGWF Leader Wins Human Rights Award

By Greg Giorgio

Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) in Bangladesh, was the recipient of the 2014 Nuremberg International Human Rights Award. Amin was recognized for his 30 years of service to the struggles of garment workers.



Photo: waronwant.org

He has also been a leader in the campaign to improve health and safety conditions in an industry that discriminates against the mostly young women who cut, sew and assemble the clothes.

Clothing represents 75 percent of the export trade from Bangladesh.

Amin has had associations with the IWW for over a decade through the union's International Solidarity Commission (ISC) and with other groups and individuals who work on sweatshop issues.

Amin began his activism in the Dhaka City Tailoring Workers Union in 1981. He had grown to see the role of labor in society as key to move toward the greater good and helped to form the NGWF in 1984. Although the International Accords of 1972 (when Bangladesh joined the International Labor Organization) established solid worker protections like freedom of association and the right to collectively bargain in Bangladesh, Amin knew that enforcement was lax and corruption be-

tween the government and factory owners was rampant. Building code and safety violations were always a problem, but have increased under the expansion of neoliberal trade policies of the last decade. Factories often close or shift location and leave workers in the cold. Labels subcontracted by the biggest suppliers like Walmart and the Gap allows them to sidestep responsibility for sub-standard wages and dangerous working conditions as well.

Amin helped to grow the NGWF to more than 27,000 members in this hostile environment. The union has been at the forefront of efforts to gain a week's vacation, the May Day holiday, and increases in the minimum wage.

"This is the time to fight," Amin told the Trades Union Congress (TUC) last year. He called attention to the fact that the erosion of real wages, attacks on pensions, and the struggle to attain a living wage was the same fight in England, Bangladesh and everywhere workers were engaged in the struggle with their bosses under capitalism.

"We will help you, too," he told me in 2006 at the Labor Notes Conference in Dearborn, Mich. It was inspirational to hear Amin convey this message of a common need to unite for the advancement of labor rights across borders.

IWW Greece Solidarity With Anarchist Prisoners On Hunger Strike

On Nov. 10, 2014, anarchist prisoner Nikos Romanos began a hunger strike laying claim to educational passes from prison so he could take classes in the university in which he had enrolled.

His application to the Prison Council, formed by attorney general Nikolaos Poimenidis, headmistress Charalambia Koutsomichali as well as a social worker, still remain unanswered. The appealing interrogator Eftichis Nikolopoulos, who has been claiming not to be tasked with this matter, has sent a document to the council reporting that Romanos' application for educational passes from prison has been denied.

Iraklis Kwstaris began his own hunger strike on Oct. 29 for educational passes from prison to take classes at the university TEI of Piraeus. He is receiving the same denying documents from the council.

IWW Greece completely supports the hunger strikers and denounces the infringement of their legal rights. In



NIKOS ROMANOS ON HUNGER STRIKE
SOLIDARITY MEANS ATTACK

Graphic: IWW Greece

solidarity we ask the council to give all educational passes from prison to Nikos Romanos and Iraklis Kwstaris immediately.

We hold the Prison Council responsible for every day of the hunger strike and for whatever happens from now on.

Support Nikos Romanos by signing the petition: https://secure.avaaz.org/el/petition/Symvoylio_Fylakon_Korydalloy_Amesi_horigisi_ekpaideytikon_adeion_toy_apergoj_peinas_Nikoy_Romanoy/?ajcVHib.

IWW Greece
IU 620 Educational Workers
IU 610 Health Workers
iwwgreece@yahoo.gr

Cambodian Guest Workers Organize

By John Kalwaic

On Oct. 27, Cambodian guest workers in Malaysia organized the Cambodian Migrant Workers' Solidarity Network at a Workers Congress in Kuala Lumpur. The workers' congress was organized by local unions, the Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association, the Cambodia Domestic Worker Network and the Cambodian Youth Network, in cooperation with non-governmental organization Dignity International. The idea was to have these guest workers organized and empowered despite not being able to form an actual union. The solidarity network is made up of garment



Auto factory workers in Malaysia

Photo: phnompenhpost.com

workers, electronic factory workers and the most exploited workers of all—domestic workers—who work as maids, house cleaners or childcare providers. Cambodian workers come to Malaysia seeking better

jobs and wages, but often they meet with the same low wages and jobs they left in Cambodia. Guest workers often come from poor countries with a high population and go to a relatively wealthier country for slightly better wages that they send home to their families. Guest workers are prime targets for abuse and often are not allowed to organize into unions.

With files from The Phnom Penh Post.

Construction Workers Riot In Istanbul

By John Kalwaic

In October 2014, hundreds of thousands of workers and students marched in Italy to protest the anti-worker laws of Premier Matteo Renzi, who has proposed making it easier for employers to fire workers. Renzi is supposedly a center-left prime minister, although he often caters to business interests. Italy's largest union, the Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL, or Italian General Confederation of Labour), launched strikes and demonstrations against the new law. The CGIL stated they would not back down unless the law was receded. Italy's pro-corporate lobby, known as Confindustria (General Confederation of Italian Industry), is pushing for tax breaks for businesses and corporations. The "labor reforms,"

known as the jobs act, which the Renzi is proposing, is supposedly meant to curb Italy's 12 percent unemployment. Renzi and the Confindustria business interests claim that by making it easier for businesses to fire workers, it will also make it easier for them to be hired. Union activists have rejected this claim. Italy has an age gap between older workers whose jobs are protected and younger workers whose jobs are more precarious. The jobs act is meant to close this gap leading to a more precarious state for all workers. Students have also joined workers in demonstrating. Many of those involved in these actions were angered by recent austerity measures by the government resulting in numerous clashes between students and workers against riot police.

With files from Revolution News!

In the wake of the disasters at the Tazreen and Rana Plaza, where the NGWF lost 42 of their members and over 1,100 others were killed, Amin was not stymied by grief.

He went on to work on reparations, helped to pass the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh in January 2014 and another minimum wage increase. "It is not enough," Amin declared earlier this year when the raise to a \$68 (U.S.) monthly minimum was passed by the government. He and other activists had sought \$100 (U.S.). This past October he presided over the negotiations to regain pay withheld by a new factory owner at the Helicon facility in Dhaka. About \$800 was recovered

for 625 employees who saw their wages slashed by the new operator.

"These multinational companies pressure the local factory owners to decrease the price" of a garment, Amin explained at his speech to the TUC. They "give lip service" only to rights like a living wage and collective bargaining, he added. He described the kinds of protections the international agreements are supposed to provide as "extremely limited" for the workers of Bangladesh.

"Send a very clear message," Amin told the TUC audience. He wants unionists and consumers alike to join together to "end the deathtraps" in Bangladesh.